United Nations E/2014/NGO/32

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 May 2014

Original: English

2014 session
Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda*
High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Statement submitted by International Shinto Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

14-32569 (E) 190514

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Statement

While Millennium Development Goal 7 has been partly achieved, there are still 1.2 billion people — 20 per cent of the world's population — with no access to safe, potable water. More than 3 billion people are forced to live without basic sanitary systems, including adequate sewerage. In the world, 5-10 million people die from water-borne diseases. Every eight seconds a child dies of a sickness caused by polluted water.

Japan is specialized in developing high-quality technology in fields related to creating water sources. One of the methods for creating water for human use is recycling. Under current circumstances, when the need for water is ever-growing while the limited amount of available fresh water is constantly diminishing, it is very important to reprocess and reuse water as much as possible. Enhancing the recovery percentage and making the most of water resources at multiple levels and in multiple fields are necessary, including developing better solutions and contributing to the improvement of water quality. Reprocessed water has been used mainly for boilers, processing of raw materials and products, cleaning, cooling and adjusting the temperature, but much more complicated processes are required to make water potable.

An innovative and simpler potable water-creation technology has recently been developed by Kanetoshi Oda, President of Japan Polygul Co., Ltd. Mr. Oda has paid attention to and focused on polyglutamic acid, which is a sticky substance of Japanese fermented soybeans, called natto. This acid had been well known for its high water-retention capacity and has been used as a raw material for various cosmetic products. He looked into methods to make the most of polyglutamic acid for water purification and created the flocculent PG α 21 series. This new product is characterized by its entirely natural components and causes no damage to the environment or the human body; natto is also biodegradable. Small amounts of PG α 21 series can flocculate (a process where colloids come out of suspension in the form of flakes) harmful substances, including heavy metals, in a large amount of dirty, tainted water, which can then be filtered as potable water. It quickly forms flocks (or flakes) and takes a very short time to precipitate. It works in a wide range of dirty waters with a pH of 4-12, which can be transformed into water safe for drinking.

Mr. Oda has been trying to distribute the product to water-scarce countries; not to make a profit, but as a social responsibility to save lives. As a pilot project, in a village in Bangladesh where children had to drink dirty pond water and became sick, he donated PG α 21 series and a filtering facility to establish a business model to sell purified, drinkable water in order to make the system self-sustainable.